**Janet:** Today is September 9th, 1995. I'm here with Dinah Safran in the Hebrew Home for the Aged in Riverdale. As a background, Mrs. Safran came from Austria, was born in Austria in 1903, which makes you 92 at this time. You came to the United States in 1920.

**Dinah:** 1921.

**Janet:** 1921.

**Dinah:** Christmas Eve in 1920, Christmas Eve. But by the time I came here, we had a rotten ship and it took a long trip, by the time I reached Ellis Island, it was already the February....

**Janet:** February, 1921.

**Dinah:** The 5th. The ship arrived February the 5th to Hoboken. Then they get in another ship to Ellis Island because we were on the third class. My mother and I came here together. They didn't want to sell to, Polish people, the second class. The children here in America, the older children, wanted to send tickets for second class, they didn't allow it. They said we have to come from the third class.

**Janet:** Why did they say that?

**Dinah:** That was their rule because they didn't like the poor people. I don't know what it is. Only the middle class people came with second or first class. We had to come and there were a lot, maybe 40 or 50 people in the third class and they had a rotten ship, The Rindan. The name of the ship is Rindan.

It took a long trip and finally when they reached here, they stopped in Hoboken, and they didn't want to let us into Ellis Island. We had to stay on the ship all day, sleep at night outside on the Hoboken, and be in the ship all day until the ship had to leave for another trip. Then we remained on the Hoboken, and we slept there on the floor and waited until we were able to come to Ellis Island.

**Janet:** Oh, boy. Well let's start at the beginning about your life in Europe before you came and then we'll get to the part about Ellis Island. Now where were you born?

**Dinah:** In Tarnopol.

**Janet:** In Tarnopol, and that's T-A-R-N-O-P-O-L?

**Dinah:** Yes.

**Janet:** Did you live in Tarnopol a whole time until you left?

**Dinah:** All the time.

**Janet:** How old were you when you left Tarnopol?

**Dinah:** 17.

**Janet:** Your mother's name? How do you [inaudible 00:03:16] her maiden name? That was her married name?

**Dinah:** Her married name, you want her maiden name?

**Janet:** Yeah.

**Dinah:** Because I came on the maiden name and her maiden name to America because in those years, when anybody didn't get married in court, the children were illegal. Only the Jewish wedding, they didn't consider it a wedding. My father and mother never got married in court, so I was considered an illegal, but my father signed on the paper that he takes the responsibility, so he made me legal.

**Janet:** I see. So you had your mother's maiden name as your maiden name?

**Dinah:** Yes.

**Janet:** How do you spell that?

**Dinah:** Werkstein. W-E-R-K-S-T-E-I-N.

**Janet:** That was your mother's name then?

**Dinah:** Yes.

**Janet:** And your father's last name?

**Dinah:** That's Barshak.

**Janet:** How do you spell that?

**Dinah:** B-A-R-S-H-A-K.

**Janet:** Did you ever have that name Barshak?

**Dinah:** I use it all the time. I never use Werkstein, only when I went to school. But then when I came out, I wanted my father's name.

**Janet:** I see because then your father had signed that he would be responsible.

**Dinah:** That I'm legal.

**Janet:** What was your father's first name?

**Dinah:** Manes. M-A-N-E-S. Manes.

**Janet:** Did you have brothers and sisters?

**Dinah:** Yes.

**Janet:** How many?

**Dinah:** We were seven children. My father was married before. He had three children when he met my mother. My mother was married when she was 18 and she lived six weeks with the man and he died. He got sick with pneumonia and he died. My mother didn't even know that she was pregnant but then it turned out that she was pregnant and she had a little girl.

She was a young girl of 20, between 20 and 21 with a little girl, so she married my father who was almost 20 years older than her with three children. His three children, the older daughter Rose, was 14 years old and my mother was 20. That was the difference.

But my mother was a very kind and quiet person. She got along well with the children. Later my father decided that he wants to go to America. He left my mother with my brother which was the first one from their marriage. He was only two years old. His children he tried to divide between their family, the first wife's family, but it turned out that they didn't like it and they came back to my mother.

They said they want to live with her even though it's hard for her, but they wouldn't mind. They'll do anything. They don't want to live with the others. They liked my mother and they stayed with us all the time. My mother was very good-natured person.

**Janet:** So when your father first went to America, you weren't born yet?

**Dinah:** Oh no. My older brother was only two years old, and then he was here only 10 months in America and he decided he didn't like it. He was a tailor, he used to work for himself but here, he had to go to a shop and he didn't like the shop. He didn't like the life to be bothered by somebody, the life like this.

At home in Tarnopol, he had his own home and he liked it better and he missed my mother of course, so he came back from America. Then my sister was born, the one that my nephew is taking an interest in me now.

**Janet:** What was that sister's name?

**Dinah:** Her name is Goldie, and she was four years younger than my brother because my father went away and then came back so she was four years younger than the brother. After Goldie was born, another child that was Fanny. Fanny was seven years older than I was. I wasn't supposed to be altogether because my father was getting old, he was already almost 58 years old when I was born and he felt terrible. He was ashamed at his age to have another child, but accidents happen and I was the accident.

He gave the [inaudible 00:08:27] the one that takes care and the [inaudible 00:08:32] he gave him a [inaudible 00:08:34] to give me the name because he was ashamed to go into the [inaudible 00:08:38] to give me the name.

That's how bad he felt when I was born. [Inaudible 00:08:45] and I grew up. I was a very small and tiny child until I was 14. I remember when I went the first day to school, I was a very shy little girl and I sat down in the last row.

The teacher came in to start seeing her pupils, when she looks around, she sees a little bit of a thing sitting there and that was me. She goes over to me, she says, "Why are you sitting here?" I said, "I don't know." She gives me a kiss on my forehead and she says, "Come," and she puts in the first row. I was so small that all the children were taller than I was and anybody blocked me that would sit in front of me.

Then I turned out that I had a good mind and I was very well liked by the teacher and I was learning very good. I used to have good marks and every time I used to send to America to the other children... little by little the children started to leave for America, and they used to send me a gift when I sent them the report card with the good marks. They used to send me a gift. My father bought me earrings and other things because they liked.

Before the war started, I've just finished public- the children wrote that my father should sell the house or give it away if he can't sell it and come to America and bring me to America. Because they think they can make something of me, another sewing girl because the other sisters learned how to sew and they were dressmakers. In my head, they wanted me to go to school.

**Janet:** The children that were in America, they were the ones that were from your father's first marriage, the oldest three?

**Dinah:** Three. Yeah.

**Janet:** Where were they in America?

**Dinah:** Then there was the one that my nephew, his mother, she was already also in America then later the rest went. When the war started, I was the only one left with my father and my mother. All the children were in America.

**Janet:** What do you remember about Tarnopol, about the town itself? What was it like?

**Dinah:** It was very nice. It was about 40,000 people living. It was a big city, beautiful streets and nice stores and Movies Theater. It was a very nice city. In fact, it's when the war broke out and the Russians came in. As soon as the war broke out, they came in and they liked the city so much that the officers brought their wives to live there.

**Janet:** Was there a Jewish section in that city?

**Dinah:** Sure, my father belonged to the Sheol. He had his own seat for himself and my mother and he was a real, what you say in Jewish, a [unknown 00:12:06]. He was well-known and he was a very clever man. People used to come for advice for certain things. He could have been a lawyer, he had a very good head, but he became an orphan when he was six years old and he was brought up by an uncle. He had to learn how to sew and he couldn't go to school anymore.

**Janet:** Was he born in Tarnopol too?

**Dinah:** Yes.

**Janet:** And your mother also?

**Dinah:** Yes, they were all from Tarnopol. My father's parents were born in Hungary but they came to Tarnopol and that's where my father was there.

**Janet:** Can you remember any experiences with your father when you were a little girl?

**Dinah:** Oh sure, my father, first he was ashamed that I was born, and then he took a liking to me. He used to teach me how to read storybooks. He used to tell me all kinds of stories. I had my older sister that was the older sister from my father's first wife. She had a little girl that was two months younger than I was.

When he went someplace, he took the two of us and everybody used to ask him if they're his grandchildren. They considered me as a grandchild. He used to laugh, he'd say, "No, she's my [unknown 00:13:43]" You know what a [unknown 00:13:45]? The youngest child in, I don't know how they express it in English. The youngest child, have they got a name for it in English?

**Janet:** No, I can't think of it.

**Dinah:** No, in Jewish, it was a [unknown 00:14:06]. That was the youngest and he took a liking to me. He taught me how to read and write and then of course I went to school anyway.

**Janet:** What were you reading in? What-

**Dinah:** First he used to teach me how to read Jewish. Then I took a rabbi to teach me Hebrew. He used to read Jewish books so he taught me how to read Jewish, reading is different than the Hebrew.

**Janet:** What's the difference between Yiddish and Jewish?

**Dinah:** Yiddish and Jewish is the same. Jewish is English and Yiddish is in Jewish and that's what it is. He used to like me, but what I wondered and finished, when they wrote that he should bring me to America and he said at his age, he was 58 years old when I was born, so he was already 68 years old because I was 10 1/2 years old.

He said at his age, he'll come to America and nobody will give him a job and the children will have to support him and he doesn't want that. He wants to make his own living and he didn't want to go. I graduated was in May and in June it broke out, the war.

**Janet:** What do you remember of the war personally?

**Dinah:** Like it was yesterday, all of a sudden, started to shoot. One of my other sisters was a married woman, she had five children. She was the only one who remained in Europe. The others were all in America. Her husband went to America not even a year before and he thought he would be in America. He would be able to bring her up with the children to America.

He didn't have the chance because the war broke out but he was lucky anyway that he was in America because they would have taken him to the Army. This way at least he was in America but she remained living in Tarnopol. First she had her own home, then she couldn't afford to keep it and she moved in with my father and my mother and me with all the five children she had.

The youngest one was one year old when I was 11. He was 10 years difference between the... But the oldest one was one year younger than I was. We lived all together like that.

**Janet:** Was your father, he was sewing? He was a tailor at that time too?

**Dinah:** Yes. Of course when the war started, how many people wanted new clothes? They had to worry for food and other things so my father couldn't make a living anymore.

**Janet:** So what did you do?

**Dinah:** I was only not even 11 years already and it went on, the war, a few months. I was 11 years old so I started to work. I used to make paper bags, I used to paste envelops, anything I could get a hold of. Then I went [inaudible 00:17:33] a friend of mine's house and I saw they were working on cigarettes, so I tried to help them to make cigarettes.

I liked the idea of working with cigarettes. That girl's didn't let me, as young as I was, only 11 years old maybe two, three months older than 11, so I went myself in one of the streets where there were a lot of stores and I went in and asked if anybody wants I should make cigarettes.

One man that had a store there, he asked me my name. He gave a look at me. I was a small thin little girl. He gave a look at me and he says, "You know how to make cigarettes?" I said, "Sure." He said, "Let's see." He took me inside in the store, he took some tobacco, the tubes and he showed me and I made a few of them.

He said, "What's your name?" and I tell him. As soon as he heard my father's name, my father was well known, popular, and he was respected very much. So he said, "Alright, I'll give you home to make. I think you'll pay 40 cents," Russian Kopeks because it was Russian already at that time. He'll pay me for a thousand cigarettes to make 40 Kopeks.

I took it and I came home and I showed my father how to make it too and I showed my nephew, the one the sister that lived with me also and we all made a living from the cigarettes. My father used to say, what would we have done without me? If [inaudible 00:19:27] me, I'm supporting him, and he trusted me whenever he had some money to put away or something.

He didn't trust my mother, she might buy something. He didn't want her to spend, so he trusted me more even than my mother. It turned out that he said, “What would he do without me?” So I was born with a purpose. That's all.

**Janet:** How did you live? What did you do for food?

**Dinah:** My mother used to cook and [inaudible 00:20:01] of course. Once a week, we had a piece of meat, otherwise she used to make barley meals mostly which was cheaper, anything that was cheaper and we all lived that way. Then across the street was an empty apartment, so my sister took it, rented it with the children because we were so crowded all the time. They lived in that apartment across from us and she used to work.

She also was a good dressmaker. She could make some dresses. If not, she worked with the cigarettes and supported herself with the children. She struggled plenty, we all struggled and that's how... But we had years, we lived through it. Then the Germans came, after three years they find that the Russians didn't want to leave our city. Every place else, they chased them out but not from our city. They liked it and they were comfortable there.

**Janet:** What were they like in your experience, having the Russians in the city?

**Dinah:** Over there at least there was more food to eat but over there they had more food and we weren't afraid of them. Of course, if a girl was older, used to send me out first to see if the soldier isn't going, they were afraid to trust the soldiers. They didn't want to take no chances but I wasn't afraid. I was a little bit of a thing. Nobody would bother with me so I had a bite that way.

**Janet:** Can you talk a little bit about how the borders changed and any effects that had on you?

**Dinah:** Nothing at all. I lived with it. When I grew up a little I used to go to dances and I used to go to parties. I used to go to a movie and lived like any normal person, but we didn't eat as [unclear 00:21:29] richer people that's all, what we grew up and we were alright and that's how we lived. Then the Germans came in. I had a girlfriend that was my size. One German soldier just saw us walking. That time over there was already I think starting to grow up, 14, 14 1/2 years old.

He started to measure us and the size that we looked alike, we used to dress alike, and so we didn't like it. We ran away and we left him there. We didn't want to bother him. We lived like that until after the Germans were chased out from the Polish, the Polish came. Then it started trouble because there wasn't enough food. The Russians had a lot of food and they didn't have so they started to ration. We had to support ourselves.

I remember once when they rationed us potatoes so I picked up... my father was already too old to go to get the potatoes, a sack of potatoes about 50 pounds, 100 pounds, who knows, a big sack. I used to go and whatever they had to ration, I used to buy it. I used to go to the drugstore, whatever we had to buy, everything he sent me instead of he should go.

Once I picked up a sack of potatoes and I strained my back. I was laid up for a while and I suffer on the back all the years from then. That was my present from the war.

**Janet:** What about medical care? Can you think about any kind of illness that struck and how it was treated over there?

**Dinah:** I had all the sicknesses. I had mumps, and I had scarlet fever, I had measles, and I lived through them. My mother attended to me and that's how we lived.

**Janet:** Do you remember any kinds of rituals around marriage or birth, or death, any kinds of ways that these things were observed when you were little?

**Dinah:** They used to make weddings, people used to get married and they lived a normal life. It was only with the different kind of government, but otherwise life went on the same thing.

**Janet:** Did you encounter anti-Semitism there?

**Dinah:** No, nobody bothered us. I remember my father paid a few cents a gentile woman to Saturday to light the fire because he was religious and he wouldn't light it on Saturday. So she used to come, she used to light it. My mother used to give away the wash to a gentile woman every few weeks. Small things she washed herself but the bigger things she gave away and it was no [inaudible 00:25:30]. It was alright. It was a normal life.

**Janet:** What is your fondest memory of your childhood, of growing up there?

**Dinah:** Nothing at all. Nothing [inaudible 00:25:43]. I was like any normal child.

**Janet:** But you were particularly good at school, it sounds like.

**Dinah:** Yeah, I had a very good mind in school. I once won in school a box of candy for spelling because the teacher said, “Whoever will spell will get a box of candy,” so I was the one that won the box of candy.

**Janet:** Do you remember the word you had to spell that made you the winner?

**Dinah:** No, that time the teacher used to like me a lot. She used to make me bring her books and all that. I was well liked in school and I never had any trouble. I was very shy and quiet girl. I was a bashful type. In fact, the one that I become good friends with, over here I have... Her mother used to call me in to play with her little girl because I was ashamed to walk in to somebody's house. I was so bashful.

She used to call me in and she wanted me to be friends with her girl, and we became such good friends. We grew up together. We went to dances together and then we came to America. I remember she came a few months after me. Over here we kept our friendship all the time and her children, I didn't have any children, her children were growing up on my hands and they call me my second mommy.

**Janet:** Now is she alive today?

**Dinah:** No, she died five years ago.

**Janet:** What was her name?

**Dinah:** Her name was Pauline. Here she is. You see with her husband.

**Janet:** Oh, I see. Can you remember some of the things you did together when you were growing up? Games or what you did?

**Dinah:** We went to dances, sure. But I used to work anyway because we had to eat. But then we used to go out and we went to movies and we went to dances and started to hang around boys and girls together just like a community. Any normal child, like over here they do.

**Janet:** When did you start thinking that you'd like to go to America?

**Dinah:** As soon as my father died. My father died... They send us from America matches for Passover and instead of it should come. It didn't come to Passover because the mail was very slow. My father used to joke and say it will probably come for [unclear 00:28:44]. You know what [00:28:05] is? Six weeks after Passover.

Then all of a sudden, one day on a Saturday, the day before [unclear 00:28:55], he started feeling bad. He was only 74 years old and he came back from Sheol and he said to my mother, “Make my bed because I think my time came.”

That was the expression he make. Of course she made his bed and then she called the doctor and the doctor asked if he was sitting in the sun a lot or he was in the Turkish bath. He was in the Turkish bath. He went the day before the holiday to the Turkish bath.

He used to brag that he can stand the heat. In a Turkish bath, the higher they go the hotter it is. All the men used to go down, it was too hot for them and he used to brag that he can take it longer, so he got a stroke from the Turkish bath.

Two days later changed the mattress, my mother says, "Look, you were right. You said they would come for [unclear 00:30:06]. Here, it's [unclear 00:30:07, just [unclear 00:30:09]. The matches came." But he didn't already understand anything and the next day he was dead. He died a day after [unclear 00:30:18].

**Janet:** Do you remember his funeral and everything?

**Dinah:** Sure.

**Janet:** What was that like?

**Dinah:** The same as any other funeral.

**Janet:** Same as here.

**Dinah:** Same as here, same thing. We had our cemetery there. Later I sent money they should put a tombstone for him because when I left for America he didn't have no tombstone yet. As soon as he died, I wrote a letter that father passed away, so the children came and went and bought tickets for us.

**Janet:** For your mother and....

**Dinah:** Mother and me. My sister with five children had to wait until her husband sent her tickets and her husband wasn't too much in a hurry. He lived here a good life. He was also a tailor but a very good one and he held a good position and so he wasn't such a hurry to bring her up with the children. But the other children contributed the money to send them out because he said he can't afford six people.

But it took a few months before she came after me. I looked on her back if she didn't become a hunchback. She looked so shriveled in those five months that she was alone with the five children struggling that it was an unusual difference in a person to change in a short time. This is what I remember very well.

**Janet:** Do you remember you and your mother getting ready to leave and leave with you?

**Dinah:** Oh sure and we decided when we made out the passport and everything, we decided that we want to go as soon as possible. We don't want to wait for my sister because he'll start waiting for her. They send us $100 for expenses to go to America and they sent us the tickets.

But they were foolish here. They didn't send it that they should pay us the $100 only what the value of the dollars are and it was worth only $30 and we didn't have enough money. I said that if I start waiting for my sister, I'll eat up the money and we wouldn't have nothing, so my mother left everything to me. She was very timid, quiet. Whatever I said it'll go so we decided that she'll go.

It came out they gave us a visa for just Christmas Eve. One of my father's cousins came to us and gave us an argument, "Why are you going to leave on Christmas Eve? Why can't you wait until Betty will get ready too?" I said, "No, we're leaving now and I can't help it any other way." Sure enough, we left. We packed up our bundle and we took the train, and you know what? One of the soldiers came in to the train, took my bundle and threw it out the window. He wanted to sit.

**Janet:** What kind of a soldier was this?

**Dinah:** A Polish.

**Janet:** A Polish soldier.

**Dinah:** So I had to get off the train and pull in back the bundle and finally I sat down with my mother in a different seat in the train and we went to Warsaw. We had to go to Warsaw first for the other visa. I had to go for a German visa, a different kind of visa, not only a Polish. The German consulate started talking to me and he asked me certain things in German and I answered him.

I spoke very good German and I used to read German books, I used to write German letters to the children. The counselor there was excited and in a half hour he was sitting and talking to me in German. He said it's the first time... He called me a Polish girl. I wasn't Polish, but he called me a Polish girl, "A Polish girl who speaks such good German?" He couldn't get over it.

**Janet:** Why did you have to go through the German council? Now the country was Polish, right but how come the German?

**Dinah:** Because we had to go to Holland to America. We had to go through Holland. We had to go even to Berlin first and then to Holland. It was a long trip. It took us three weeks, the trip, until we finally came to Holland and then we had to wait for the rotten ship that we got.

**Janet:** You said you were shy and timid but it also sounds like you knew how to take charge.

**Dinah:** I could take charge of everything. I could be a responsible person. That's why my father started depending on me, because he saw with me, he can get around better than the others didn't bother as much. They were different. They lived their own lives and I always took care of... I was very devoted to my mother because if my father wanted to punish me sometimes as a child, my mother used to protect me. And if I asked sometimes a penny for candy or something, and my father didn't want to give it to me, my mother gave it to me on the side. That's what made the difference.

**Janet:** Tell me about the Rindan, the ship that you got.

**Dinah:** The ship, it was white underneath, you know how a ship is built. In the bottom of the ship, each rat was so big and ran over the people. It was terrible. I became seasick the minute the ship started to move. My mother wasn't seasick and I was seasick the whole time.

The sailors used to come in to clean out the... They couldn't pull me off the bed to clean out. It was terrible. My mother thought she would bring me dead to America. It took me so long, it was 13 days on the ship and I couldn't hold my head up. It was impossible. I had to go to the toilet, I couldn't move, it was terrible.

I went through hell until finally when the ship stopped, so they started saying they didn't let us off. They said some people said they'll send back the ship with the people on the third class. I said I'll drown myself. I don't want to go back to Europe and I don't care what they do, I'm not going back.

I remained there but they didn’t send us back anyway. I stayed there and waited so long until finally they let us into Ellis Island. My mother, they looked into her eyes, so she started to complain so the doctor, the one that looked into her eyes, sent her to a doctor to see if it's something wrong with the eyes because when anybody had bad eyes, they didn't let them into America. Did you know that?

**Janet:** Yes.

**Dinah:** So they sent her to a doctor to make sure that her eyes were alright. My eyes were alright, so they sent her away to see the doctor, and they sent me in to the room in Ellis Island where they interview the people that have to get off the ship. I came in crying and I was standing there crying.

I see some man stands there and talks to the inspector that was sitting there that was supposed to interview me and he goes over and he talks to him something. Later I knew what, but at that time I didn't know. Then he says with his hand like this, "Don't cry. Don't cry. Don't cry." I say, "What the hell does that man want from me? It's his business if I want to cry" I felt terrible. Then it turned out it was my brother, and he recognized me because I looked exactly like the other sister. He used to see her later-

**Janet:** Which sister is that?

**Dinah:** Huh?

**Janet:** Which sister did you look just like?

**Dinah:** The one on this side.

**Janet:** What was her name?

**Dinah:** Fanny. She was seven years older than I was and then when I came to this country, I was 17 years old and she was already a married woman with a child of three years old. I looked exactly like her. Now you can imagine how I grew up in the last three years, from 14 to 17. It was such a change in me.

He was wondering then the door.... My brother told me later when the door opened and I walked in, he said, "What's Fanny doing here?"

He couldn't imagine that it was me because he knew I'm a small child. He said when he came to America. The only child he missed was me. I was two and a half years when he left for America because he says I was an unusual child, very talkative and joking and all that. He liked me a lot. He missed me more than anybody else when he went to America. How do you like that?

**Janet:** Which brother was that? What was his name?

**Dinah:** He became a doctor later. That was the first one that was two years old when my father went to America.

**Janet:** What was his name?

**Dinah:** His name was Max Bashark. His Jewish name was Moishe. In here he called himself Max. Later when I showed my mother, "Mama, this is Moishe," she gave a look, she said, "No, that's not him." She didn't recognize him. He left a young boy of 17.

We were 14 1/2 years difference. I was two and half, so she didn't recognize him. I said, "Mama, I spoke to him. It's Moishe." She couldn't believe then he comes over to her. She says, [foreign 00:41:02], says, "He became fat." He was a doctor already. He was married and had a little girl already of 18 months when I came here.

**Janet:** He recognized you because you looked like Fanny and then what happened at Ellis Island?

**Dinah:** Then they told me by the time they... Another man comes over to me and says, "Don't cry." I said, "That man keeps on telling me." He says, "Don't worry. That's her brother. Don't worry. He means well, but he'll bring mother back to you. Don't worry." Finally that inspector called me over because my brother spoke to him again.

He says, "Dinah?" I said, "Yeah. Moishe?" I'm telling you I couldn't imagine Moishe. He says, "Why do you cry?" in Jewish. I said, "They took my mother away and I can't understand why." He says, "Don't worry. They only took her to the eye doctor and she'll come back. But it's too late already today to get you off the Ellis Island because it's after 4.Until 4, they let out the people. After 4, they wouldn't let you out so you have to wait until tomorrow morning. You have to sleep over in Ellis Island.”

I had to sleep over in Ellis Island with my mother. They gave us two bunks and one little blanket. We put the blanket on the bunk and I had my winter coat because it was winter when I came here. I had the winter coat and my mother her winter coat. We covered ourselves and we slept like that and in the morning, they gave us breakfast.

**Janet:** What was that like?

**Dinah:** Huh?

**Janet:** What was the breakfast like?

**Dinah:** Something different that I didn't eat. They gave grapefruit or a [inaudible 00:43:05] in the morning. I never had that and I get cereal and coffee. To me it was a delicious good breakfast. My mother also she was not complaining and she was surprised that they give so much food to eat and then 10 o'clock my brother came.

I saw him come in, I said to my mother, "Mama, this is Moishe," and she couldn't believe it. But when he spoke to her, she realized that he grew up and he changed. He was a young boy and he was slim when he left for America, a young 17 year old boy and here he was already I think 31 years old and married and a little girl of 18 months. It turned out that they let us off from Ellis Island.

Then they decided that being my father isn't here anymore, it's no use to fix up a home for us. I can live with one sister and my mother can live with another sister. They took my mother to the sister, the one that my nephew is coming here. He comes here all the time. Me, they took to that Fanny. She happened to have a husband that wasn't a good-natured person. Nobody in the family cared for him.

I stayed with him and I was separated from my mother which I didn't like because I love my mother very dearly and I didn't want to be without her. She didn't complain or anything. What could she do? They told her to stay with the daughter so she used to help. She had a little girl six months old, she used to help with the diapers and do all these things and she didn't complain.

I couldn't understand why they did that but my brother-in-law kept on complaining, "Why did they have to send her to me?" They only lived in three rooms so they had to put a folding bed for me to sleep and he complained. I understood and I didn't like it and I complained to my brother and I told him that I don't like to stay with him, do something. He spoke to my older brother.

The older brother, he was the one from the first wife and he was married and he had a wonderful woman, a wife. They didn't have no children either. They helped my brother become a doctor and they were very close all the time. He told that brother about me. He said, "Let her come to me." I can't stay with Fanny so they took me to.... For a while I stayed with them but then it turned out that it's no good.

One of the older sister, he one that had a little girl two months younger than I was, she lived downtown and she had, on Second Street, an apartment there and downstairs lived a superintendent, a Jewish couple. The Jewish couple had seven children and she was the superintendent from that building.

I even remember the number 116 East, Second Street. That's where she lived. The landlord gave her another apartment where the children should sleep so she rented out two rooms from the other apartment, a kitchen and a dining room. My sister said I should rent it and I grabbed it right away, I think $10 a month and I was glad. I went to work here and I paid the rent.

**Janet:** What did you do for work?

**Dinah:** My brother recommended me. He was a doctor so he had a patient that has a factory for silk winding machine, all kinds. I became a winder, first by wool and then by silk.

**Janet:** We're recording. It's so interesting. You could keep talking. So you had the job as a silk winder, as a winder in a silk factory so then you took the two rooms, just you alone?

**Dinah:** I lived with my mother on until later we got a better apartment, we changed. It was a two room apartment also but it had a toilet. The other one, I had to go in the hole in the toilet but this was already $21 a month and I could afford already so we took that better-

**Janet:** Was that in the Lower East Side?

**Dinah:** Yeah, on Livingstone Street. We moved there, and I lived there until I got married, with my mother. Then I took my mother with me when I got married.

**Janet:** How did you meet your husband?

**Dinah:** I belonged to a club and a lot of Tarnopol people got together and they organized a club. When they saw me, they called me to become a member of them. I was active there, I was president, I was vice-president, I was over secretary. Even though I was the shy type, it turned out different. We lived together. My mother lived with me for over 21 years.

**Janet:** What was life like in the Lower East Side when you first moved there?

**Dinah:** Very comfortable and lively. I used to go out, my sister used to complain, "You grabbed downtown." They lived in the Bronx and they always wanted me to come and I wasn't in a hurry to go to the Bronx. I was busy, I wanted to go dancing, I wanted to go to the club. We were always active. We used to make balls, we enjoyed ourselves.

That's how I met my husband but then he wanted to go out with me, I made one proposition, "I can go with you on one condition." "What is that?" "Only if my mother can live with us, otherwise I don't want to start up because I don't want to leave my mother." He said he's satisfied and he's alright.

**Janet:** What was your husband's name?

**Dinah:** Boinev Safran, but I called him Benny. Benny Safran.

**Janet:** Was he also coming from Europe?

**Dinah:** He came from Lumberg. That was a bigger city than Tarnopol. It was the main city from the [unclear 00:50:48]. He was a very nice man. We went to Los Angeles once and we were on the airplane and a man got sick so the stewardess ran over to my husband and asked him if he's a doctor. They needed a doctor. That's how he looked like a doctor but he was a plumber. I made fun of him, I said, "You're doctor for the toilets."

**Janet:** So what happened then? Was your husband a plumber when you first met him?

**Dinah:** Yes, sure. That time he worked for somebody else but later he got a license and he worked for himself. That was different.

**Janet:** Did you stay in the Lower East Side for many years?

**Dinah:** No, as soon as I got married, I took an apartment right away in the Bronx, four rooms, near my sister. We lived one near one another and I lived there for many years in `the Bronx.

**Janet:** Did you work after you were married?

**Dinah:** No. First I didn't. I don't know what had happened, they gave me a present when I gave up my job and all that, but later it was the depression started or something so I had to go to work. My husband felt terrible. He said he didn't get married, I should support him. But he couldn't help it, so I went to work for a while. But I worked in a factory where they made belts and some different things. But I had to make something. The events were too plenty in my life but I met everything with courage and that's all I can tell you.

**Janet:** Do you remember anything else about the depression time?

**Dinah:** There was plenty to remember. What do you want to know?

**Janet:** Did your life change much during the depression?

**Dinah:** Well a little. It was very hard. My husband wanted to get a job out of the town and not where we lived in the Bronx. I didn't let him. I said, "We'll struggle together," but he didn't want me to go to work. I said, "Look, it's only for a while. Things will change." Eventually it did change and he never left any place. We lived together all the time.

**Janet:** Do you think the fact that you came here as a 17 year old young lady, I guess, and lived the rest of your life here, do you think the fact that you immigrated to a new country, do you think that made a big difference in your as a person?

**Dinah:** I don't think so. I was always like myself and I just tackled whatever was necessary and that's all.

**Janet:** What makes you feel very satisfied that you've done in your lifetime? What makes you feel good that you've managed-?

**Dinah:** Well that I didn't commit any crime and I didn't go anything in the wrong place. My husband and I were both the type we could anybody help, we helped. We had eight cars in our lifetime and whenever we went some place, we never went with an empty car. We always took along people whenever we went here. There is a picture he made in a fair, either I was president or I arranged a banquet and all that. I had a lot of very nice comfortable life.

When I became a citizen, April 1st, 1926 I became a citizen. The judge spoke to me a few words and then he asks me, "Do you like America?" I said, "I should say I do?" He laughed and that's all. That was the truth. I sure do like America. I said as long as I live, I don't care to make a trip to Europe. I went to Los Angeles. I went to different parts of here but never outside of America. I said, this is my home and I want America. I'm always happy in America.

**Janet:** How about your mother? How did she feel about America?

**Dinah:** My mother liked it very much too but she only wanted to be with me. When she was sometime a few days by her sister, she was glad that she's back home with me and she wanted to be with me all the time. She died, she was 86 years old.

**Janet:** How about this phase of your life? How do you feel about this phase, your old age time?

**Dinah:** This time, I'm not satisfied. I don't like to be that old and I'm sorry that I reached that age. I would rather die than to live this old. I'm comfortable here, it's a nice home and all that but I'm not happy. I don't like that life. There are people here that are 8, 10, 12 years, I couldn't take it. It's not in me.

**Janet:** Do you make friends here? Do you find people you have a lot in common?

**Dinah:** It's very hard, very hard. Most of them are deaf. You can't talk to them, very hard to associate with somebody. I have some people by the table [inaudible 00:56:44] she has eardrops all the time in the ears. The other ones, always something wrong. I don't like it. That's all I know.

**Dinah:** Is there anything else you want to say about coming here, being American?

**Dinah:** No. I'm only lucky that I have that nephew. He is one of the most wonderful people in the world. He's got two sons and a daughter. The daughter lives in Israel and the two sons are here. Yesterday they both called me up. Every week they call me to wish me a [unknown 00:57:23] and all that. They are religious.

I used to be religious, I was brought up. My father was religious, but since it was with Hitler with all the trouble and they let so many Jews killed and all that, I stopped being religious. I liked kosher meals. I wanted to come here because I wanted Kosher. After that I don't like their meals anyway. But the thing is that it was no good that... I got mixed up already.

**Janet:** You were saying the whole thing with Hitler, you stopped being religious.

**Dinah:** So I stopped being religious. I never ate any ham and all that and that's what it is, but I don't believe there is a God. If there was a God, he couldn't let happen what had happened. I stopped believing that was it.

**Janet:** What is your nephew's name?

**Dinah:** Hermes Stern.

**Janet:** And he has children?

**Dinah:** Most wonderful children. He's got 10 grandchildren and they are all unusually nice people. I'm very happy about it. He has a sister, one sister that was six months old when I came to this country. She was just now 75 years old. She talks to me over the phone but I'm here such a long time already, she didn't even find the time to come to see me once. My nephew comes once, twice, three times a week. He is such a wonderful person.

**Janet:**  Okay. I want to just close off here. I’ve been talking to Dinah Safran and today is September 9th, 1995 and I want to thank you very much for a very interesting interview.

**Dinah:** You found it interesting?

**Janet:** I certainly did. And the way you say things is very interesting too. Thank you very much.

**Dinah:** You're welcome.